

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 21

May 5, 2009

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS ON MAY 5, 2009

SUBJECT: THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT PURPLE HEART -  
ESTABLISHED; AND COMMENDATION REPORT 01.18.00 - REVISED

EFFECTIVE: IMMEDIATELY

PURPOSE: This Order establishes the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Purple Heart. The Police Commission has approved the awarding of the LAPD Purple Heart to officers seriously injured in the line of duty and families of officers killed in the line of duty.

PROCEDURE: The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Purple Heart may be presented to officers seriously injured in the line of duty and families of officers killed in the line of duty, based on specific criteria.

I. THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT PURPLE HEART -  
ESTABLISHED. The LAPD Purple Heart may be awarded to:

- \* Officers who sustain a traumatic physical injury as a result of a suspect's action(s) during an on-duty tactical situation;
- \* Officers who die in the line of duty as a direct result of a suspect's action(s). In cases involving an officer's line of duty death, not the direct result of a suspect's action(s), the Commendations Board may exercise discretion to award the medal; and,
- \* Officers, who through no fault of their own, sustain a traumatic physical injury during the performance of job related functions such as a violent encounter with the criminal element, a rescue operation, a hazardous materials exposure, a riot, a traffic collision or other accident.

The Los Angeles Police Department Purple Heart is awarded by the Commendations Board in the name of the Department and presented by the Chief of Police at an appropriate ceremony. The award consists of a medal, lapel pin, and ribbon.

The Commendations Board has the discretion to consider any request involving officers killed in the line of duty and officers who suffer traumatic physical injury in the line of duty; however, requests to be considered for the Purple Heart will be critically scrutinized to ensure the spirit

and intent of the award is given to truly deserving officers or their families. It is not the intent of the Department to confer the award to officers that are injured in non-tactical situations.

The LAPD Purple Heart will not be awarded if the injury occurred as a direct result of the officer's negligent or inappropriate actions.

Area/division commanding officers shall follow procedures for submitting Commendation Reports, as outlined in Department Manual Section 3/756.

The LAPD Purple Heart can be awarded retroactively to the families of officers killed in the line of duty and to active officers who meet the Purple Heart criteria. Under these circumstances, families and officers meeting the criteria would have six months from the date of the Special Order to submit a request to the Commendations Board via the concerned Area/division of occurrence.

Behavioral Science Services (BSS) will be responsible for contacting the families of officers killed in the line of duty who meet the criteria to receive the LAPD Purple Heart. If a family desires to be considered for the LAPD Purple Heart, BSS shall act on the family's behalf to contact the Area/division of occurrence to which the officer was last assigned. The Area/division of occurrence shall obtain records of the incident from Medical Liaison Section and submit a completed Commendation Report, via their chain of command, to the Commendations Board.

## II. DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE LAPD PURPLE HEART

The following are definitions and guidelines for implementation of this Order.

- \* Traumatic physical injury is defined as a substantial bodily injury, permanent disfigurement or serious impairment of the physical condition;
- \* General guidelines for traumatic physical injuries that merit the Purple Heart Medal are as follows:
  - a) Any serious and substantial physical injury which involved a substantial risk of death;
  - b) A serious physical injury requiring inpatient treatment and a protracted hospital stay;

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- c) The loss or protracted physical impairment of the function of any body part; or,
- d) Serious physical disfigurement.

**Note:** The injury must have required treatment by a medical doctor for the injuries received in the line of duty and must have been a matter of an official record.

**III. COMMENDATION REPORT 01.18.00 - REVISED.** The Commendation Report is revised to add the LAPD Purple Heart.

**FORM AVAILABILITY:** The Commendation Report, Form 01.18.00, is available in LAPD Forms on the Department Local Area Network (LAN) System.

**AMENDMENTS:** This Order revises Department Manual Sections 3/637.20 and 3/756.05.

**AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY:** The Commanding Officer, Internal Audits and Inspections Division, shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.



WILLIAM J. BRATTON  
Chief of Police

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